

Michigan
Agri-Weekly

Agriculture, Sustainability and the Environment

Agri-Weekly is a weekly news article produced by the Michigan Agri-Business Association to address timely topics in agriculture and rural living. This is a free service for journalists interested in reporting on timely agricultural news. Articles appearing in this release are not copyrighted and can be reproduced at no cost. To have this service sent to a friend, or to be removed from this list, e-mail your request to maba@miagbiz.org.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THURSDAY, SEPT. 18, 2008

Don't Overturn Deer Baiting Ban Too Hastily, Legislature Cautioned

Legislature should listen to science, protect livestock industry, people

EAST LANSING – The **Michigan Agri-Business Association** cautioned the Michigan Legislature against hastily acting to weaken or even overturn the ban on deer-baiting, which was enacted to contain deer-borne chronic wasting disease (CWD) from spreading to the free-ranging deer and elk herds of Michigan.

“We urge the Legislature to let all the information and data come in before prematurely getting involved, which could result in unintended consequences that could put our hunting tradition at risk,” MABA President **Jim Byrum** said. “The Legislature should refrain from interfering at this point and setting a dangerous precedent of involving itself in an invasive disease outbreak before the initial scientific investigation has even been concluded. We do not yet fully understand the scope of this disease, how far it has spread and what its impact could be. The ban should continue until we learn more facts – and the Legislature should allow science and the information-gathering process to take its course.”

In August, the Michigan Departments of Natural Resources and Agriculture took preventive measures to contain CWD, a brain-wasting disease similar to mad cow disease that is found in deer and elk. The disease was found in a deer from a captive cervid operation in Kent County. The preventive measures include quarantines on captive hunting operations and banning deer baiting, while state officials conduct their investigation. The quarantines and ban on deer baiting have the support of a wide range of groups, including the Michigan United Conservation Club, the Michigan United Deer Hunters the Michigan Farm Bureau and others.

“These are common-sense steps that we need to pursue,” **Byrum** said. “Before the Legislature starts reversing these preventive measures, we should consider the question of cost and the answers that science can provide us. We must not act rashly in the fight against CWD.”

###

Brought to you by
*Michigan Agri-Business Association
and Bayer CropScience*
Contact: *Jim Byrum, MABA President*
(517) 336-0223, e-mail: jim@miagbiz.org

